

Hackett's Genesis spirit



Steve Hackett... picking the acoustic instrumental Horizons (Foxtrot)

By Steve Scott

Former Genesis lead guitarist Steve Hackett is bringing his own band to Auckland in July to perform under the banner Steve Hackett and Genesis Revisited.

He says he is 'absolutely thrilled' that so many of Genesis' songs written in the 1970s are considered to be worth more than a second listen.

"I think songs that are written, often very quickly, well you have no idea of the longevity or effect that they are going to have on listeners or concert-goers.

"And to be honest, I am absolutely thrilled that so many of our ideas are considered worthy of a second listen after all these years."

Veteran fans of Genesis can be assured that some songs from Hackett's final album with Genesis, **Wind and Wuthering** will be performed to celebrate its 40th anniversary.

"That is the tour we have been undertaking in Britain, Europe and Scandinavia, where we are doing great versions of *Blood On The Rooftops*, *Afterglow* and *Eleventh Earl Of Mar*."

The initial idea for Genesis Revisited came to Hackett in 2013.

"Back then I thought, I would take a risk.

"Either this is going to fall flat on its face, or it's going to go ballistic.

"Lucky for me, it was the latter."

Over the last four years, Hackett's Genesis Revisited has delighted audiences around the world and its early peak came during a filmed concert at London's Hammersmith Theatre in May 2013.

A triple CD/DVD of the event **Genesis Revisited: Live At Hammersmith** was released and received ecstatic reviews. Featuring a host of songs from many of Genesis' albums from the very early **Foxtrot** (*Watcher Of The Skies*, *Supper's Ready*) to **The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway** (*Fly On A Windshield*) - some of which Hackett continues to include today, provided the guitarist with the confidence to continue with the project.

The musicians that performed at Hammersmith will be accompanying Hackett for his Auckland concert.

On lead vocals is Nad Sylvan, on drums Gary O' Toole, saxophonist and flautist is Rob Townsend, keyboardist is Roger King and on bass is Nick Beggs - seen last year at the Power Station with prog-god, Steven Wilson.

Hackett says he feels his band have truly captured the Genesis spirit.

"I often think, it is not necessarily the people who write the songs who are the true owners.

"I think for the listener, it is the enthusiasm and if you can find musicians and singers who combine those qualities, then they are living the song and keeping the dream alive.

"I am very proud of the team that I've got who have truly inherited the Genesis spirit from the '70s and don't feel at all

compromised doing that.

"I particularly remember our singer Nad mentioning to me his album **Unifaun** (2008).

"He said it was in the spirit of Genesis and it featured the kind of songs Genesis could have done.

"So I believe Genesis was a very important band for him and a big influence and it is wonderful that he reiterated to me that he is happy to keep doing this, even though he has been producing great solo stuff and constantly touring to rave reviews."

During the 1980s when fronted by drummer-turned singer Phil Collins, its more commercial pop sound took the band to globally-conquering heights with massive hits including *Invisible Touch* and *I Can't Walk*.

But it is the Genesis of the 70s heralded by creative lead singer Peter Gabriel whose material Hackett revisits.

In those days Genesis were an 'albums' band and received little support from the BBC-dominated radio.

Fans were increasing via word of mouth and it culminated in three sell-out shows at London's vast Earls Court in late 1976.

For many, it's their album **Selling England By The Pound** with tracks including *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)* and *Firth Of Fifth* which many regard as its classic release and which Hackett continues to revisit.

At the same time, Genesis found it increasingly hard to remain positive when bookings for gigs in the USA were looking bleak, until a comment by the late John Lennon gave them hope.

"I remember being in New York in 1973, the year of *Selling England By The Pound* and we were feeling desperate.

"I mean some times we would just sit around for two weeks in one place, trying to get gigs and we were just about to give up and leave.

"Suddenly Peter said and very proudly, 'I have just heard John Lennon on the radio stating that Genesis were one of the bands he was listing too at the moment.

"Ha if only we could have tweeted that news..."

"But I still think today it was lovely that we had Lennon's seal of approval, it gave the band heart and hope and the will to carry on despite our mounting debts."

Genesis did indeed carry on delivering the massive **The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway** double album before Gabriel's departure and Phil Collins leading the charge to pop domination.

At the same time, Hackett was also considering a change (his debut solo album **The Voyage Of The Acolyte** was released while still a member) and following its next album **Wind and Wuthering** Hackett departed to begin a more broad and adventurous journey.

Please Don't Touch was his first post-Genesis album and became indicative of the multi-cultural musical path he would follow.

It featured the rich talents of the late Richie Havens, Randy Crawford and Chester Thompson.

"For *Please Don't Touch* I had the idea of doing an album that was a cross between white European music and black American music and I was fortunate to get stellar performances from all those people.

Three years later, **Out Of The Tunnel's Mouth** (2009) revealed influences from Turkey.

On his latest release, his 25th solo album **The Night Siren**, Hackett has incorporated musicians and instruments from a variety of countries. They include vocalists from Israel and Palestine, a sitar player from India, a tar from the Middle East and a charango from Peru which he purchased when visiting the country.

Certainly *The Night Siren* incorporates a United Nations of music.

"That's a good way of putting it, the idea of musical unity has been a life-long ambition of mine.

"At times I have totally immersed myself in other cultures to do that, I mean I spent quite a lot of time in South America with percussionists and next week I am off to Hungary."

Hackett says he will include a few tracks including the single **Behind The Smoke** from *The Night Siren* at his Auckland concert.

The video for *Behind The Smoke* was filmed in Serbia and its focus is on fleeing refugees.

Hackett recalls how his own family on his mother's side and his wife Jo's side were refugees fleeing Poland who ended up in London's East End.

"Thinking about that of late, it suddenly bought back to me not that they were refugees, but that they were allowed into Britain because now we are heading into a more anti-social Brexit.

"As a musician who constantly tours the world and through Europe freely between borders, it is now looking like the requiem for a dream, the idea we are saying goodbye to direct routes back to England, it is terrible."

But Hackett is looking forward very much to his New Zealand visit.

"Absolutely, it is the first time for Jo and I and I hope its not our last.

"I have never had the invitation before so better late than never and my uncle lived to 108 so I have longevity on my side."

**STEVE HACKETT -
GENESIS REVISITED
AUCKLAND TOWN HALL
FRIDAY JULY 28TH**

Tickets: Ticketmaster.